119TH CONGRESS
1st Session
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
REPORT
119–368

MERCHANT BANKING MODERNIZATION ACT

NOVEMBER 4, 2025.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. HILL of Arkansas, from the Committee on Financial Services, submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

MINORITY VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 5291]

The Committee on Financial Services, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 5291) to amend the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 to generally permit holding merchant banking investments of up to 15 years, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

CONTENTS

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Merchant Banking Modernization Act".

SEC. 2. MERCHANT BANKING INVESTMENT HOLDING PERIOD.

Section 4(k)(7)(A) of the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 (12 U.S.C. 1843(k)(7)(A)) is amended by inserting "Under such regulations, the period of time generally permitted for holding merchant banking investments shall not be less than 15 years. For any merchant banking investment held on the date of enactment of the Merchant Banking Modernization Act, the holding period of time permitted shall not be less than 15 years from the initial date of the investment." after the period at the end.

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

H.R. 5291, the *Merchant Banking Modernization Act*, was introduced on September 10, 2025, by Republican Representative Roger Williams (TX–25). This bill would amend the *Bank Holding Company Act* to generally permit the holding of merchant banking investments for at least 15 years.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Among other activities, a financial holding company (FHC) is permitted to engage in merchant banking whereby it acquires or controls an ownership interest in a firm engaged in nonbank activities ("portfolio company"), if certain prerequisites are met. Pursuant to the *Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act (GLBA)*, the Federal Reserve Board (FRB) and Department of the Treasury were authorized to promulgate regulations governing FHCs' ownership or control of portfolio companies whose activities went beyond the permissible nonbank activities enumerated in the *Bank Holding Company Act* and related regulations.

Pursuant to the authority conferred by *GLBA*, the FRB and Treasury promulgated rules governing FHCs' portfolio company investments which, among other things, placed a ten-year limit on FHCs' ownership, control, or holding of ownership interests in a portfolio company. FHCs have the ability to petition the FRB for a five-year extension to the ten-year limit regarding a given portfolio company investment, with the FRB considering approval or denial based on the following:

- The cost to the FHC of disposing of the investment within the holding period limit;
- The FHC's total exposure to the investment and risks of asset disposition to the FHC;
- The prevailing market conditions;
- The nature of the portfolio company's business;
- The extent of FHC involvement in portfolio company management and operations; and
- The average holding period of all merchant banking investments of the FHC.

H.R. 5291 would maintain the incentive for portfolio holding companies to commit to longer time horizons while increasing stability. Under the bill, the FRB may, if appropriate, exercise discretion to curtail the holding period of a given portfolio company investment of an FHC.

COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION

119TH CONGRESS

On September 10, 2025, Representative Williams introduced H.R. 5291, the *Merchant Banking Modernization Act*. Representative Josh Gottheimer (D–NJ) was added subsequently as a cosponsor. The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Financial Services.

The bill was attached to the September 9, 2025, hearing titled "Promoting the Health of the Banking Sector: Reforming Resolution and Broadening Funding Access for Long-Term Resilience."

On September 16, 2025, the Committee on Financial Services met in open session to consider, among others, H.R. 5291. The Committee ordered H.R. 5291, as amended, to be favorably reported to the House of Representatives.

RELATED HEARINGS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(6) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the following hearing was used to develop H.R. 5291:

The Subcommittee on Financial Institutions held a September 9, 2025, hearing titled "Promoting the Health of the Banking Sector: Reforming Resolution and Broadening Funding Access for Long-Term Resilience." A draft version of the bill was attached to the hearing. The subcommittee heard testimony from the following witnesses: Mr. Dory Wiley, President and CEO, Commerce Street Holdings; Mr. James B. Barresi, Partner, Squire Patton Boggs; Mr. Hugh Carney, Executive Vice President of Financial Institution Policy and Regulatory Affairs, American Bankers Association; Dr. Norbert Michel, Vice President and Director, Cato Institute Center for Monetary and Financial Alternatives; and Mr. Robert James, President and CEO, Carver Financial Corporation, on behalf of the National Bankers Association.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires the Committee Report to include record votes on the motion to report legislation and amendments thereto.

On September 16, 2025, the Committee ordered H.R. 5291, as amended, to be reported favorably to the House by a recorded vote of 35 yeas and 17 nays, a quorum being present. (Record Vote No. FC–203).

Before the question to report was called, Representative Williams offered an amendment in the nature of a substitute, designated WILLTX_045, which made minor edits and technical changes. This amendment was adopted by a voice vote.

Committee on Financial Services

Markup 8
September 16, 2025

Bill: **H.R. 5291**
Measure: **H.R. 5291 (as amended)**
Amdt/Designated:

Motion: **to report favorably**

Record Vote No.
FC-203

Disposition: **AGREED TO (35-17)**

Member	Yea	Nay	Not Recorded	Member	Yea	Nay	Not Recorded
Chairman Hill	X			Ranking Member Waters		X	
Mr. Lucas	X			Ms. Velázquez		X	
Mr. Sessions	X			Mr. Sherman		X	
Mr. Huizenga	X			Mr. Meeks		X	
Mrs. Wagner	X			Mr. Scott		X	
Mr. Barr	X			Mr. Lynch		X	
Mr. Williams (TX)	X			Mr. Green (TX)		X	
Mr. Emmer	X			Mr. Cleaver	X		
Mr. Loudermilk	X			Mr. Himes		X	
Mr. Davidson	X			Mr. Foster		X	
Mr. Rose	X			Mrs. Beatty		X	
Mr. Steil	X			Mr. Vargas		X	
Mr. Timmons	X			Mr. Gottheimer	X		
Mr. Stutzman	X			Mr. Gonzalez	X		
Mr. Norman	X			Mr. Casten		X	
Mr. Meuser	X			Ms. Pressley		X	
Mrs. Kim	X			Ms. Tlaib		X	
Mr. Donalds			X	Mr. Torres (NY)	X		
Mr. Garbarino	X			Ms. Garcia (TX)	X		
Mr. Fitzgerald	X			Ms. Williams of GA		X	
Mr. Flood	X			Ms. Pettersen		X	
Mr. Lawler	X			Mr. Fields		X	
Ms. De La Cruz	X			Ms. Bynum	X		
Mr. Ogles	X			Mr. Liccardo	X		
Mr. Nunn	X						
Mrs. McClain	X						
Ms. Salazar			X				
Mr. Downing	X						
Mr. Haridopolos	X						
Mr. Moore (NC)	X						
	28	**0**	**2**		**7**	**17**	**0**

Committee Totals:	**35**	**17**	**2**
	Yeas	Nays	Not Voting

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

Pursuant to clause 3(c) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the findings and recommendations of the Committee, based on oversight activities under clause 2(b)(1) of rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives are incorporated in the descriptive portions of this report.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the goal of H.R. 5291 is to permit relevant holding companies to generally hold merchant banking investments for no less than 15 years.

COMMITTEE COST ESTIMATE

Clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison of the costs that would be incurred in carrying out H.R. 5291. The Committee has requested but not received a cost estimate from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office. However, pursuant to clause 3(d)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee will adopt as its own the cost estimate by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office once it has been prepared.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND CBO COST ESTIMATE

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974* and with respect to requirements of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974*, the Committee will adopt as its own the cost estimate for the bill prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office. However, a cost estimate was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chairman of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the Congressional Record upon its receipt by the Committee.

UNFUNDED MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office an estimate of the Federal mandates pursuant to section 423 of the *Unfunded Mandates Reform Act*. The Chairman of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the Congressional Record upon its receipt by the Committee.

EARMARK STATEMENT

In compliance with clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, this bill, as reported, contains no congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(e), 9(f), or 9(g) of rule XXI.

FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the *Federal Advisory Committee Act* were created by this legislation.

APPLICABILITY TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the *Congressional Accountability Act*.

DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee states that no provision of the bill establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal Government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, including any program that was included in a report to Congress pursuant to section 21 of the Public Law 111–139 or the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 provides the short title is the "Merchant Banking Modernization Act".

Section 2. Merchant banking investment holding period

Section 2 amends the Bank Holding Company Act of 1956 to require FRB regulations on FHC merchant banking investments to generally permit a holding period of not less than 15 years. For existing merchant banking investments, this section mandates that the holding period shall not be less than 15 years from the initial date of investment.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (new matter is printed in italics and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

BANK HOLDING COMPANY ACT OF 1956

* * * * * * *

INTERESTS IN NONBANKING ORGANIZATIONS

SEC. 4. (a) Except as otherwise provided in this Act, no bank holding company shall—

(1) after the date of enactment of this Act acquire direct or indirect ownership or control of any voting shares of any company which is not a bank, or

(2) after two years from the date as of which it becomes a bank holding company, or in the case of a company which has been continuously affiliated since May 15, 1955, with a com-

pany which was registered under the Investment Company Act of 1940, prior to May 15, 1955, in such a manner as to constitute an affiliated company within the meaning of that Act, after December 31, 1978, or, in the case of any company which becomes, as a result of the enactment of the Bank Holding Company Act Amendments of 1970, a bank holding company on the date of such enactment, after December 31, 1980, retain direct or indirect ownership or control of any voting shares of any company which is not a bank or bank holding company or engage in any activities other than (A) those of banking or of managing or controlling banks and other subsidiaries authorized under this Act or of furnishing services to or performing services for its subsidiaries, and (B) those permitted under paragraph (8) of subsection (c) of this section subject to all the conditions specified in such paragraph or in any order or regulation issued by the Board under such paragraph: *Provided,* That a company covered in 1970 may also engage in those activities in which directly or through a subsidiary (i) it was lawfully engaged on June 30, 1968 (or on a date subsequent to June 30, 1968 in the case of activities carried on as the result of the acquisition by such company or subsidiary, pursuant to a binding written contract entered into on or before June 30, 1968, of another company engaged in such activities at the time of the acquisition), and (ii) it has been continuously engaged since June 30, 1968 (or such subsequent date). The Board by order, after opportunity for hearing, may terminate the authority conferred by the preceding proviso on any company to engage directly or through a subsidiary in any activity otherwise permitted by that proviso if it determines, having due regard to the purposes of this Act, that such action is necessary to prevent undue concentration of resources, decreased or unfair competition, conflicts of interest, or unsound banking practices; and in the case of any such company controlling a bank having bank assets in excess of $60,000,000 on or after the date of enactment of the Bank Holding Company Act Amendments of 1970 the Board shall determine, within two years after such date (or, if later, within two years after the date on which the bank assets first exceed $60,000,000), whether the authority conferred by the preceding proviso with respect to such company should be terminated as provided in this sentence. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed to authorize any bank holding company referred to in the preceding proviso, or any subsidiary thereof, to engage in activities authorized by that proviso through the acquisition, pursuant to a contract entered into after June 30, 1968, of any interest in or the assets of a going concern engaged in such activities. Any company which is authorized to engage in any activity pursuant to the preceding proviso or subsection (d) of this section but, as a result of action of the Board, is required to terminate such activity may (notwithstanding any otherwise applicable time limit prescribed in this paragraph) retain the ownership or control of shares in any company carrying on such activity for a period of ten years from the date on which its authority was so terminated by the Board. Notwithstanding any other provision of this paragraph, if any company that be-

came a bank holding company as a result of the enactment of the Competitive Equality Amendments of 1987 acquired, between March 5, 1987, and the date of the enactment of such Amendments, an institution that became a bank as a result of the enactment of such Amendments, that company shall, upon the enactment of such Amendments, immediately come into compliance with the requirements of this Act.

The Board is authorized, upon application by a bank holding company, to extend the two-year period referred to in paragraph (2) above from time to time as to such bank holding company for not more than one year at a time, if, in its judgment, such an extension would not be detrimental to the public interest, but no such extensions shall in the aggregate exceed three years. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the period ending December 31, 1980, referred to in paragraph (2) above, may be extended by the Board of Governors to December 31, 1984, but only for the divestiture by a bank holding company of real estate or interests in real estate lawfully acquired for investment or development. In making its decision whether to grant such extension, the Board shall consider whether the company has made a good faith effort to divest such interests and whether such extension is necessary to avert substantial loss to the company.

(b) After two years from the date of enactment of this Act, no certificate evidencing shares of any bank holding company shall bear any statement purporting to represent shares of any other company except a bank or a bank holding company, nor shall the ownership, sale, or transfer of shares of any bank holding company be conditioned in any manner whatsoever upon the ownership, sale, or transfer of shares of any other company except a bank or a bank holding company.

(c) The prohibitions in this section shall not apply to (i) any company that was on January 4, 1977, both a bank holding company and a labor, agricultural, or horticultural organization exempt from taxation under section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, or to any labor, agricultural, or horticultural organization to which all or substantially all of the assets of such company are hereafter transferred, or (ii) a company covered in 1970 more than 85 per centum of the voting stock of which was collectively owned on June 30, 1968, and continuously thereafter, directly or indirectly, by or for members of the same family, or their spouses, who are lineal descendants of common ancestors; and such prohibitions shall not, with respect to any other bank holding company, apply to—

(1) shares of any company engaged or to be engaged solely in one or more of the following activities: (A) holding or operating properties used wholly or substantially by any banking subsidiary of such bank holding company in the operations of such banking subsidiary or acquired for such future use; or (B) conducting a safe deposit business; or (C) furnishing services to or performing services for such bank holding company or its banking subsidiaries; or (D) liquidating assets acquired from such bank holding company or its banking subsidiaries or acquired from any other source prior to May 9, 1956, or the date on which such company became a bank holding company, whichever is later;

(2) shares acquired by a bank holding company or any of its subsidiaries in satisfaction of a debt previously contracted in good faith, but such shares shall be disposed of within a period of two years from the date on which they were acquired, except that the Board is authorized upon application by such bank holding company to extend such period of two years from time to time as to such holding company if, in its judgment, such an extension would not be detrimental to the public interest, and, in the case of a bank holding company which has not disposed of such shares within 5 years after the date on which such shares were acquired, the Board may, upon the application of such company, grant additional exemptions if, in the judgment of the Board, such extension would not be detrimental to the public interest and, either the bank holding company has made a good faith attempt to dispose of such shares during such 5-year period, or the disposal of such shares during such 5-year period would have been detrimental to the company, except that the aggregate duration of such extensions shall not extend beyond 10 years after the date on which such shares were acquired;

(3) shares acquired by such bank holding company from any of its subsidiaries which subsidiary has been requested to dispose of such shares by any Federal or State authority having statutory power to examine such subsidiary, but such bank holding company shall dispose of such shares within a period of two years from the date on which they were acquired;

(4) shares held or acquired by a bank in good faith in a fiduciary capacity, except where such shares are held under a trust that constitutes a company as defined in section 2(b) and except as provided in paragraphs (2) and (3) of section 2(g);

(5) shares which are of the kinds and amounts eligible for investment by national banking associations under the provisions of section 5136 of the Revised Statutes;

(6) shares of any company which do not include more than 5 per centum of the outstanding voting shares of such company;

(7) shares of an investment company which is not a bank holding company and which is not engaged in any business other than investing in securities, which securities do not include more than 5 per centum of the outstanding voting shares of any company;

(8) shares of any company the activities of which had been determined by the Board by regulation or order under this paragraph as of the day before the date of the enactment of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, to be so closely related to banking as to be a proper incident thereto (subject to such terms and conditions contained in such regulation or order, unless modified by the Board);

(9) shares held or activities conducted by any company organized under the laws of a foreign country the greater part of whose business is conducted outside the United States, if the Board by regulation or order determines that, under the circumstances and subject to the conditions set forth in the regulation or order, the exemption would not be substantially at

variance with the purposes of this Act and would be in the public interest;

(10) shares lawfully acquired and owned prior to May 9, 1956, by a bank which is a bank holding company, or by any of its wholly owned subsidiaries;

(11) shares owned directly or indirectly by a company covered in 1970 in a company which does not engage in any activities other than those in which the bank holding company, or its subsidiaries, may engage by virtue of this section, but nothing in this paragraph authorizes any bank holding company, or subsidiary thereof, to acquire any interest in or the assets of any going concern (except pursuant to a binding written contract entered into before June 30, 1968, or pursuant to another provision of this Act) other than one which was a subsidiary on June 30, 1968;

(12) shares retained or acquired, or activities engaged in, by any company which becomes, as a result of the enactment of the Bank Holding Company Act Amendments of 1970, a bank holding company on the date of such enactment, or by any subsidiary thereof, if such company—

(A) within the applicable time limits prescribed in subsection (a)(2) of this section (i) ceases to be a bank holding company, or (ii) ceases to retain direct or indirect ownership or control of those shares and to engage in those activities not authorized under this section; and

(B) complies with such other conditions as the Board may by regulation or order prescribe;

(13) shares of, or activities conducted by, any company which does no business in the United States except as an incident to its international or foreign business, if the Board by regulation or order determines that, under the circumstances and subject to the conditions set forth in the regulation or order, the exemption would not be substantially at variance with the purposes of this Act and would be in the public interest; or

(14) shares of any company which is an export trading company whose acquisition (including each acquisition of shares) or formation by a bank holding company has not been disapproved by the Board pursuant to this paragraph, except that such investments, whether direct or indirect, in such shares shall not exceed 5 per centum of the bank holding company's consolidated capital and surplus.

(A)(i) No bank holding company shall invest in an export trading company under this paragraph unless the Board has been given sixty days' prior written notice of such proposed investment and within such period has not issued a notice disapproving the proposed investment or extending for up to another thirty days the period during which such disapproval may be issued.

(ii) The period for disapproval may be extended for such additional thirty-day period only if the Board determines that a bank holding company proposing to invest in an export trading company has not furnished all the information required to be submitted or that in the Board's judgment any material information submitted is substantially inaccurate.

(iii) The notice required to be filed by a bank holding company shall contain such relevant information as the Board shall require by regulation or by specific request in connection with any particular notice.

(iv) The Board may disapprove any proposed investment only if—

(I) such disapproval is necessary to prevent unsafe or unsound banking practices, undue concentration of resources, decreased or unfair competition, or conflicts of interest;

(II) the Board finds that such investment would affect the financial or managerial resources of a bank holding company to an extent which is likely to have a materially adverse effect on the safety and soundness of any subsidiary bank of such bank holding company, or

(III) the bank holding company fails to furnish the information required under clause (iii).

(v) LEVERAGE.—The Board may not disapprove any proposed investment solely on the basis of the anticipated or proposed asset-to-equity ratio of the export trading company with respect to which such investment is proposed, unless the anticipated or proposed annual average asset-to-equity ratio is greater than 20-to-1.

(vi) Within three days after a decision to disapprove an investment, the Board shall notify the bank holding company in writing of the disapproval and shall provide a written statement of the basis for the disapproval.

(vii) A proposed investment may be made prior to the expiration of the disapproval period if the Board issues written notice of its intent not to disapprove the investment.

(B)(i) The total amount of extensions of credit by a bank holding company which invests in an export trading company, when combined with all such extensions of credit by all the subsidiaries of such bank holding company, to an export trading company shall not exceed at any one time 10 per centum of the bank holding company's consolidated capital and surplus. For purposes of the preceding sentence, an extension of credit shall not be deemed to include any amount invested by a bank holding company in the shares of an export trading company.

(ii) No provision of any other Federal law in effect on October 1, 1982, relating specifically to collateral requirements shall apply with respect to any such extension of credit.

(iii) No bank holding company or subsidiary of such company which invests in an export trading company may extend credit to such export trading company or to customers of such export trading company on terms more favorable than those afforded similar borrowers in similar circumstances, and such extension of credit shall not involve more than the normal risk of repayment or present other unfavorable features.

(C) For purposes of this paragraph, an export trading company—

(i) may engage in or hold shares of a company engaged in the business of underwriting, selling, or distributing securities in the United States only to the extent that any bank holding company which invests in such export trading company may do so under applicable Federal and State banking laws and regulations; and

(ii) may not engage in agricultural production activities or in manufacturing, except for such incidental product modification including repackaging, reassembling or extracting byproducts, as is necessary to enable United States goods or services to conform with requirements of a foreign country and to facilitate their sale in foreign countries.

(D) A bank holding company which invests in an export trading company may be required, by the Board, to terminate its investment or may be made subject to such limitations or conditions as may be imposed by the Board, if the Board determines that the export trading company has taken positions in commodities or commodity contracts, in securities, or in foreign exchange, other than as may be necessary in the course of the export trading company's business operations.

(E) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an Edge Act corporation, organized under section 25(a) of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 611–631), which is a subsidiary of a bank holding company, or an agreement corporation, operating subject to section 25 of the Federal Reserve Act (12 U.S.C. 601–604(a)), which is a subsidiary of a bank holding company, may invest directly and indirectly in the aggregate up to 5 per centum of its consolidated capital and surplus (25 per centum in the case of a corporation not engaged in banking) in the voting stock of other evidences of ownership in one or more export trading companies.

(F) For purposes of this paragraph—

(i) the term "export trading company" means a company which does business under the laws of the United States or any State, which is exclusively engaged in activities related to international trade, and which is organized and operated principally for purposes of exporting goods or services produced in the United States or for purposes of facilitating the exportation of goods or services produced in the United States by unaffiliated persons by providing one or more export trade services.

(ii) the term "export trade services" includes, but is not limited to, consulting, international market research, advertising, marketing, insurance (other than acting as principal, agent or broker in the sale of insurance on risks resident or located, or activities performed, in the United States, except for insurance covering the transportation of cargo from any point of origin in the United States to a point of final destination outside the United States), product research and de-

sign, legal assistance, transportation, including trade documentation and freight forwarding, communication and processing of foreign orders to and for exporters and foreign purchasers, warehousing, foreign exchange, financing, and taking title to goods, when provided in order to facilitate the export of goods or services produced in the United States;

(iii) the term "bank holding company" shall include a bank which (I) is organized solely to do business with other banks and their officers, directors, or employees; (II) is owned primarily by the banks with which it does business; and (III) does not do business with the general public. No such other bank, owning stock in a bank described in this clause that invests in an export trading company, shall extend credit to an export trading company in an amount exceeding at any one time 10 per centum of such other bank's capital and surplus; and

(iv) the term "extension of credit" shall have the same meaning given such term in the fourth paragraph of section 23A of the Federal Reserve Act.

(G) DETERMINATION OF STATUS AS EXPORT TRADING COMPANY.—

(i) TIME PERIOD REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes of determining whether an export trading company is operated principally for the purposes described in subparagraph (F)(i)—

(I) the operations of such company during the 2-year period beginning on the date such company commences operations shall not be taken into account in making any such determination; and

(II) not less than 4 consecutive years of operations of such company (not including any portion of the period referred to in subclause (I)) shall be taken into account in making any such determination.

(ii) EXPORT REVENUE REQUIREMENTS.—A company shall not be treated as operated principally for the purposes described in subparagraph (F)(i) unless—

(I) the revenues of such company from the export, or facilitating the export, of goods or services produced in the United States exceed the revenues of such company from the import, or facilitating the import, into the United States of goods or services produced outside the United States; and

(II) at least ⅓ of such company's total revenues are revenues from the export, or facilitating the export, of goods or services produced in the United States by persons not affiliated with such company.

(H) INVENTORY.—

(i) NO GENERAL LIMITATION.—The Board may not prescribe by regulation any maximum dollar amount

limitation on the value of goods which an export trading company may maintain in inventory at any time.

(ii) SPECIFIC LIMITATION BY ORDER.—Notwithstanding clause (i), the Board may issue an order establishing a maximum dollar amount limitation on the value of goods which a particular export trading company may maintain in inventory at any time (after such company has been operating for a reasonable period of time) if the Board finds that, under the facts and circumstances, such limitation is necessary to prevent risks that would affect the financial or managerial resources of an investor bank holding company to an extent which would be likely to have a materially adverse effect on the safety and soundness of any subsidiary bank of such bank holding company.

The Board shall include in its annual report to the Congress a description and a statement of the reasons for approval of each activity approved by it by order or regulation under such paragraph during the period covered by the report.

(d) To the extent that such action would not be substantially at variance with the purposes of this Act and subject to such conditions as it considers necessary to protect the public interest, the Board by order, after opportunity for hearing, may grant exemptions from the provisions of this section to any bank holding company which controlled one bank prior to July 1, 1968, and has not thereafter acquired the control of any other bank in order (1) to avoid disrupting business relationships that have existed over a long period of years without adversely affecting the banks or communities involved, or (2) to avoid forced sales of small locally owned banks to purchasers not similarly representative of community interests, or (3) to allow retention of banks that are so small in relation to the holding company's total interests and so small in relation to the banking market to be served as to minimize the likelihood that the bank's powers to grant or deny credit may be influenced by a desire to further the holding company's other interests.

(e) With respect to shares which were not subject to the prohibitions of this section as originally enacted by reason of any exemption with respect thereto but which were made subject to such prohibitions by the subsequent repeal of such exemption, no bank holding company shall retain direct or indirect ownership or control of such shares after five years from the date of the repeal of such exemption, except as provided in paragraph (2) of subsection (a). Any bank holding company subject to such five-year limitation on the retention of nonbanking assets shall endeavor to divest itself of such shares promptly and such bank holding company shall report its progress in such divestiture to the Board two years after repeal of the exemption applicable to it and annually thereafter.

(f) CERTAIN COMPANIES NOT TREATED AS BANK HOLDING COMPANIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (9), any company which—

(A) on March 5, 1987, controlled an institution which became a bank as a result of the enactment of the Competitive Equality Amendments of 1987; and

(B) was not a bank holding company on the day before the date of the enactment of the Competitive Equality Amendments of 1987,

shall not be treated as a bank holding company for purposes of this Act solely by virtue of such company's control of such institution.

(2) LOSS OF EXEMPTION.—Subject to paragraph (3), a company described in paragraph (1) shall no longer qualify for the exemption provided under that paragraph if—

(A) such company directly or indirectly—

(i) acquires control of an additional bank or an insured institution (other than an insured institution described in paragraph (10) or (12) of this subsection) after March 5, 1987; or

(ii) acquires control of more than 5 percent of the shares or assets of an additional bank or a savings association other than—

(I) shares held as a bona fide fiduciary (whether with or without the sole discretion to vote such shares);

(II) shares held by any person as a bona fide fiduciary solely for the benefit of employees of either the company described in paragraph (1) or any subsidiary of that company and the beneficiaries of those employees;

(III) shares held temporarily pursuant to an underwriting commitment in the normal course of an underwriting business;

(IV) shares held in an account solely for trading purposes;

(V) shares over which no control is held other than control of voting rights acquired in the normal course of a proxy solicitation;

(VI) loans or other accounts receivable acquired in the normal course of business;

(VII) shares or assets acquired in securing or collecting a debt previously contracted in good faith, during the 2-year period beginning on the date of such acquisition or for such additional time (not exceeding 3 years) as the Board may permit if the Board determines that such an extension will not be detrimental to the public interest;

(VIII) shares or assets of a savings association described in paragraph (10) or (12) of this subsection;

(IX) shares of a savings association held by any insurance company, as defined in section 2(a)(17) of the Investment Company Act of 1940, except as provided in paragraph (11);

(X) shares issued in a qualified stock issuance under section 10(q) of the Home Owners' Loan Act; and

(XI) assets that are derived from, or incidental to, activities in which institutions described in

subparagraph (F) or (H) of section 2(c)(2) are permitted to engage;

except that the aggregate amount of shares held under this clause (other than under subclauses (I), (II), (III), (IV), (V), and (VIII)) may not exceed 15 percent of all outstanding shares or of the voting power of a savings association;

(B) any bank subsidiary of such company—

(i) accepts demand deposits or deposits that the depositor may withdraw by check or similar means for payment to third parties; and

(ii) engages in the business of making commercial loans (except that, for purposes of this clause, loans made in the ordinary course of a credit card operation shall not be treated as commercial loans); or

(C) after the date of the enactment of the Competitive Equality Amendments of 1987, any bank subsidiary of such company permits any overdraft (including any intraday overdraft), or incurs any such overdraft in the account of the bank at a Federal reserve bank, on behalf of an affiliate, other than an overdraft described in paragraph (3).

(3) PERMISSIBLE OVERDRAFTS DESCRIBED.—For purposes of paragraph (2)(C), an overdraft is described in this paragraph if—

(A) such overdraft results from an inadvertent computer or accounting error that is beyond the control of both the bank and the affiliate;

(B) such overdraft—

(i) is permitted or incurred on behalf of an affiliate that is monitored by, reports to, and is recognized as a primary dealer by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York; and

(ii) is fully secured, as required by the Board, by bonds, notes, or other obligations that are direct obligations of the United States or on which the principal and interest are fully guaranteed by the United States or by securities and obligations eligible for settlement on the Federal Reserve book entry system; or

(C) such overdraft—

(i) is permitted or incurred by, or on behalf of, an affiliate in connection with an activity that is financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity; and

(ii) does not cause the bank to violate any provision of section 23A or 23B of the Federal Reserve Act, either directly, in the case of a bank that is a member of the Federal Reserve System, or by virtue of section 18(j) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, in the case of a bank that is not a member of the Federal Reserve System.

(4) DIVESTITURE IN CASE OF LOSS OF EXEMPTION.—If any company described in paragraph (1) fails to qualify for the exemption provided under paragraph (1) by operation of paragraph (2), such exemption shall cease to apply to such company and such company shall divest control of each bank it controls

before the end of the 180-day period beginning on the date on which the company receives notice from the Board that the company has failed to continue to qualify for such exemption, unless, before the end of such 180-day period, the company has—

(A) either—

(i) corrected the condition or ceased the activity that caused the company to fail to continue to qualify for the exemption; or

(ii) submitted a plan to the Board for approval to cease the activity or correct the condition in a timely manner (which shall not exceed 1 year); and

(B) implemented procedures that are reasonably adapted to avoid the reoccurrence of such condition or activity.

(5) SUBSECTION CEASES TO APPLY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.—This subsection shall cease to apply to any company described in paragraph (1) if such company—

(A) registers as a bank holding company under section 5(a) of this Act;

(B) immediately upon such registration, complies with all of the requirements of this Act, and regulations prescribed by the Board pursuant to this Act, including the nonbanking restrictions of this section; and

(C) does not, at the time of such registration, control banks in more than one State, the acquisition of which would be prohibited by section 3(d) of this Act if an application for such acquisition by such company were filed under section 3(a) of this Act.

(6) INFORMATION REQUIREMENT.—Each company described in paragraph (1) shall, within 60 days after the date of enactment of the Competitive Equality Amendments of 1987, provide the Board with the name and address of such company, the name and address of each bank such company controls, and a description of each such bank's activities.

(7) EXAMINATION.—The Board may, from time to time, examine a company described in paragraph (1), or a bank controlled by such company, or require reports under oath from appropriate officers or directors of such company or bank solely for purposes of assuring compliance with the provisions of this subsection and enforcing such compliance.

(8) ENFORCEMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In addition to any other power of the Board, the Board may enforce compliance with the provisions of this Act which are applicable to any company described in paragraph (1), and any bank controlled by such company, under section 8 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act and such company or bank shall be subject to such section (for such purposes) in the same manner and to the same extent as if such company or bank were a State member insured bank.

(B) APPLICATION OF OTHER ACT.—Any violation of this Act by any company described in paragraph (1), and any bank controlled by such company, may also be treated as a violation of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act for purposes of subparagraph (A).

(C) NO EFFECT ON OTHER AUTHORITY.—No provision of this paragraph shall be construed as limiting any authority of the Comptroller of the Currency or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

(9) TYING PROVISIONS.—A company described in paragraph (1) shall be—

(A) treated as a bank holding company for purposes of section 106 of the Bank Holding Company Act Amendments of 1970 and section 22(h) of the Federal Reserve Act and any regulation prescribed under any such section; and

(B) subject to the restrictions of section 106 of the Bank Holding Company Act Amendments of 1970, in connection with any transaction involving the products or services of such company or affiliate and those of a bank affiliate, as if such company or affiliate were a bank and such bank were a subsidiary of a bank holding company.

(10) EXEMPTION UNAFFECTED BY CERTAIN EMERGENCY ACQUISITIONS.—For purposes of clauses (i) and (ii)(VIII) of paragraph (2)(A), an insured institution is described in this paragraph if—

(A) the insured institution was acquired (or any shares or assets of such institution were acquired) by a company described in paragraph (1) in an acquisition under section 408(m) of the National Housing Act or section 13(k) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act; and

(B) either—

(i) the insured institution is located in a State in which such company controlled a bank on March 5, 1987; or

(ii) the insured institution has total assets of $500,000,000 or more at the time of such acquisition.

(11) SHARES HELD BY INSURANCE AFFILIATES.—Shares described in clause (ii)(IX) of paragraph (2)(A) shall not be excluded for purposes of clause (ii) of such paragraph if—

(A) all shares held under such clause (ii)(IX) by all insurance company affiliates of such savings association in the aggregate exceed 5 percent of all outstanding shares or of the voting power of the savings association; or

(B) such shares are acquired or retained with a view to acquiring, exercising, or transferring control of the savings association.

(12) EXEMPTION UNAFFECTED BY CERTAIN OTHER ACQUISITIONS.—For purposes of clauses (i) and (ii)(VIII) of paragraph (2)(A), an insured institution is described in this paragraph if the insured institution was acquired (or any shares or assets of such institution were acquired) by a company described in paragraph (1)—

(A) from the Resolution Trust Corporation, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, or the Director of the Office of Thrift Supervision, in any capacity; or

(B) in an acquisition in which the insured institution has been found to be in danger of default (as defined in section 3 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act) by the appropriate Federal or State authority.

(13) SPECIAL RULE RELATING TO SHARES ACQUIRED IN A QUALIFIED STOCK ISSUANCE.—A company described in paragraph (1) that holds shares issued in a qualified stock issuance pursuant to section 10(q) of the Home Owners' Loan Act by any savings association or savings and loan holding company (neither of which is a subsidiary) shall not be deemed to control such savings association or savings and loan holding company solely because such company holds such shares unless—

(A) the company fails to comply with any requirement or condition imposed by paragraph (2)(A)(ii)(X) or section 10(q) of the Home Owners' Loan Act with respect to such shares; or

(B) the shares are acquired or retained with a view to acquiring, exercising, or transferring control of the savings association or savings and loan holding company.

(14) FOREIGN BANK SUBSIDIARIES OF LIMITED PURPOSE CREDIT CARD BANKS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An institution described in section 2(c)(2)(F) may control a foreign bank if—

(i) the investment of the institution in the foreign bank meets the requirements of section 25 or 25A of the Federal Reserve Act and the foreign bank qualifies under such sections;

(ii) the foreign bank does not offer any products or services in the United States; and

(iii) the activities of the foreign bank are permissible under otherwise applicable law.

(B) OTHER LIMITATIONS INAPPLICABLE.—The limitations contained in any clause of section 2(c)(2)(F) shall not apply to a foreign bank described in subparagraph (A) that is controlled by an institution described in such section.

(g) LIMITATIONS ON CERTAIN BANKS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this section (other than the last sentence of subsection (a)(2)), a bank holding company which controls an institution that became a bank as a result of the enactment of the Competitive Equality Amendments of 1987 may retain control of such institution if such institution does not—

(A) engage in any activity after the date of the enactment of such Amendments which would have caused such institution to be a bank (as defined in section 2(c), as in effect before such date) if such activities had been engaged in before such date; or

(B) increase the number of locations from which such institution conducts business after March 5, 1987.

(2) LIMITATIONS CEASE TO APPLY UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.—The limitations contained in paragraph (1) shall cease to apply to a bank described in such paragraph at such time as the acquisition of such bank, by the bank holding company referred to in such paragraph, would not be prohibited under section 3(d) of this Act if—

(A) an application for such acquisition were filed under section 3(a) of this Act; and

(B) such bank were treated as an additional bank (under section 3(d)).

(h) TYING PROVISIONS.—

(1) APPLICABLE TO CERTAIN EXEMPT INSTITUTIONS AND PARENT COMPANIES.—An institution described in subparagraph (D), (F), (G), or (H) of section 2(c)(2) shall be treated as a bank, and a company that controls such an institution shall be treated as a bank holding company, for purposes of section 106 of the Bank Holding Company Act Amendments of 1970 and section 22(h) of the Federal Reserve Act and any regulation prescribed under any such section.

(2) APPLICABLE WITH RESPECT TO CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS.—A company that controls an institution described in subparagraph (D), (F), (G), or (H) of section 2(c)(2) and any of such company's other affiliates, shall be subject to the tying restrictions of section 106 of the Bank Holding Company Act Amendments of 1970 in connection with any transaction involving the products or services of such company or affiliate and those of such institution, as if such company or affiliate were a bank and such institution were a subsidiary of a bank holding company.

(i) ACQUISITION OF SAVINGS ASSOCIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Board may approve an application by any bank holding company under subsection (c)(8) to acquire any savings association in accordance with the requirements and limitations of this section.

(2) PROHIBITION ON TANDEM RESTRICTIONS.—In approving an application by a bank holding company to acquire a savings association, the Board shall not impose any restriction on transactions between the savings association and its holding company affiliates, except as required under sections 23A and 23B of the Federal Reserve Act or any other applicable law.

(3) ACQUISITION OF INSOLVENT SAVINGS ASSOCIATIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, any qualified savings association which became a federally chartered stock company in December of 1986 and which is acquired by any bank holding company without Federal financial assistance after June 1, 1991, and before March 1, 1992, and any subsidiary of any such association, may after such acquisition continue to engage within the home State of the qualified savings association in insurance agency activities in which any Federal savings association (or any subsidiary thereof) may engage in accordance with the Home Owners' Loan Act and regulations pursuant to such Act if the qualified savings association or subsidiary thereof was continuously engaged in such activity from June 1, 1991, to the date of the acquisition.

(B) DEFINITION OF QUALIFIED SAVINGS ASSOCIATION.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term "qualified savings association" means any savings association that—

(i) was chartered or organized as a savings association before June 1, 1991;

(ii) had, immediately before the acquisition of such association by the bank holding company referred to in subparagraph (A), negative tangible capital and total insured deposits in excess of $3,000,000,000; and

(iii) will meet all applicable regulatory capital requirements as a result of such acquisition.

(4) SOLICITATION OF VIEWS.—

(A) NOTICE.—Upon receiving any application or notice by a bank holding company to acquire, directly or indirectly, a savings association under subsection (c)(8), the Board shall solicit comments and recommendations from—

(i) the Comptroller of the Currency, with respect to the acquisition of a Federal savings association; and

(ii) the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, with respect to the acquisition of a State savings association.

(B) COMMENT PERIOD.—The comments and recommendations of the Comptroller of the Currency or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, as applicable, under subparagraph (A) with respect to any acquisition subject to such subparagraph shall be transmitted to the Board not later than 30 days after the receipt by the Comptroller of the Currency or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, as applicable, of the notice relating to such acquisition (or such shorter period as the Board may specify if the Board advises the Comptroller of the Currency or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, as applicable, that an emergency exists that requires expeditious action).

(5) EXAMINATION.—

(A) SCOPE.—The Board shall consult with the Comptroller of the Currency or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, as appropriate, in establishing the scope of an examination by the Board of a bank holding company that directly or indirectly controls a savings association.

(B) ACCESS TO INSPECTION REPORTS.—Upon the request of the Comptroller of the Currency or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Board shall furnish the Comptroller of the Currency or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, as applicable, with a copy of any inspection report, additional examination materials, or supervisory information relating to any bank holding company that directly or indirectly controls a savings association.

(6) COORDINATION OF ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS.—The Board and the Comptroller of the Currency or the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, as applicable, shall cooperate in any enforcement action against any bank holding company that controls a savings association, if the relevant conduct involves such association.

(8) INTERSTATE ACQUISITIONS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Board may not approve an application by a bank holding company to acquire an insured depository institution under subsection (c)(8) or any other provision of this Act if—

(i) the home State of such insured depository institution is a State other than the home State of the bank holding company; and

(ii) the applicant (including all insured depository institutions which are affiliates of the applicant) controls, or upon consummation of the transaction would

control, more than 10 percent of the total amount of deposits of insured depository institutions in the United States.

(B) EXCEPTION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not apply to an acquisition that involves an insured depository institution in default or in danger of default, or with respect to which the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation provides assistance under section 13 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (12 U.S.C. 1823).

(j) NOTICE PROCEDURES FOR NONBANKING ACTIVITIES.—

(1) GENERAL NOTICE PROCEDURE.—

(A) NOTICE REQUIREMENT.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), no bank holding company may engage in any nonbanking activity or acquire or retain ownership or control of the shares of a company engaged in activities based on subsection (c)(8) or (a)(2) or in any complementary activity under subsection (k)(1)(B) without providing the Board with written notice of the proposed transaction or activity at least 60 days before the transaction or activity is proposed to occur or commence.

(B) CONTENTS OF NOTICE.—The notice submitted to the Board shall contain such information as the Board shall prescribe by regulation or by specific request in connection with a particular notice.

(C) PROCEDURE FOR AGENCY ACTION.—

(i) NOTICE OF DISAPPROVAL.—Any notice filed under this subsection shall be deemed to be approved by the Board unless, before the end of the 60-day period beginning on the date the Board receives a complete notice under subparagraph (A), the Board issues an order disapproving the transaction or activity and setting forth the reasons for disapproval.

(ii) EXTENSION OF PERIOD.—The Board may extend the 60-day period referred to in clause (i) for an additional 30 days. The Board may further extend the period with the agreement of the bank holding company submitting the notice pursuant to this subsection.

(iii) DETERMINATION OF PERIOD IN CASE OF PUBLIC HEARING.—In the event a hearing is requested or the Board determines that a hearing is warranted, the Board may extend the notice period provided in this subsection for such time as is reasonably necessary to conduct a hearing and to evaluate the hearing record. Such extension shall not exceed the 91-day period beginning on the date that the hearing record is complete.

(D) APPROVAL BEFORE END OF PERIOD.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Any transaction or activity may commence before the expiration of any period for disapproval established under this paragraph if the Board issues a written notice of approval.

(ii) SHORTER PERIODS BY REGULATION.—The Board may prescribe regulations which provide for a shorter

notice period with respect to particular activities or transactions.

(E) EXTENSION OF PERIOD.—In the case of any notice to engage in, or to acquire or retain ownership or control of shares of any company engaged in, any activity pursuant to subsection (c)(8) or (a)(2) or in any complementary activity under subsection (k)(1)(B) that has not been previously approved by regulation, the Board may extend the notice period under this subsection for an additional 90 days. The Board may further extend the period with the agreement of the bank holding company submitting the notice pursuant to this subsection.

(2) GENERAL STANDARDS FOR REVIEW.—

(A) CRITERIA.—In connection with a notice under this subsection, the Board shall consider whether performance of the activity by a bank holding company or a subsidiary of such company can reasonably be expected to produce benefits to the public, such as greater convenience, increased competition, or gains in efficiency, that outweigh possible adverse effects, such as undue concentration of resources, decreased or unfair competition, conflicts of interests, unsound banking practices, or risk to the stability of the United States banking or financial system.

(B) GROUNDS FOR DISAPPROVAL.—The Board may deny any proposed transaction or activity for which notice has been submitted pursuant to this subsection if the bank holding company submitting such notice neglects, fails, or refuses to furnish the Board all the information required by the Board.

(C) CONDITIONAL ACTION.—Nothing in this subsection limits the authority of the Board to impose conditions in connection with an action under this section.

(3) NO NOTICE REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN TRANSACTIONS.—No notice under paragraph (1) of this subsection or under subsection (c)(8) or (a)(2)(B) is required for a proposal by a bank holding company to engage in any activity, other than any complementary activity under subsection (k)(1)(B), or acquire the shares or assets of any company, other than an insured depository institution or a company engaged in any complementary activity under subsection (k)(1)(B), if the proposal qualifies under paragraph (4).

(4) CRITERIA FOR STATUTORY APPROVAL.—A proposal qualifies under this paragraph if all of the following criteria are met:

(A) FINANCIAL CRITERIA.—Both before and immediately after the proposed transaction—

(i) the acquiring bank holding company is well capitalized;

(ii) the lead insured depository institution of such holding company is well capitalized;

(iii) well capitalized insured depository institutions control at least 80 percent of the aggregate total risk-weighted assets of insured depository institutions controlled by such holding company; and

(iv) no insured depository institution controlled by such holding company is undercapitalized.

(B) MANAGERIAL CRITERIA.—

(i) WELL MANAGED.—At the time of the transaction, the acquiring bank holding company, its lead insured depository institution, and insured depository institutions that control at least 90 percent of the aggregate total risk-weighted assets of insured depository institutions controlled by such holding company are well managed.

(ii) LIMITATION ON POORLY MANAGED INSTITUTIONS.—Except as provided in paragraph (6), no insured depository institution controlled by the acquiring bank holding company has received 1 of the 2 lowest composite ratings at the later of the institution's most recent examination or subsequent review.

(C) ACTIVITIES PERMISSIBLE.—Following consummation of the proposal, the bank holding company engages directly or through a subsidiary solely in—

(i) activities that are permissible under subsection (c)(8), as determined by the Board by regulation or order thereunder, subject to all of the restrictions, terms, and conditions of such subsection and such regulation or order; and

(ii) such other activities as are otherwise permissible under this section, subject to the restrictions, terms and conditions, including any prior notice or approval requirements, provided in this section.

(D) SIZE OF ACQUISITION.—

(i) ASSET SIZE.—The book value of the total assets to be acquired does not exceed 10 percent of the consolidated total risk-weighted assets of the acquiring bank holding company.

(ii) CONSIDERATION.—The gross consideration to be paid for the securities or assets does not exceed 15 percent of the consolidated Tier 1 capital of the acquiring bank holding company.

(E) NOTICE NOT OTHERWISE WARRANTED.—For proposals described in paragraph (5)(B), the Board has not, before the conclusion of the period provided in paragraph (5)(B), advised the bank holding company that a notice under paragraph (1) is required.

(F) COMPLIANCE CRITERION.—During the 12-month period ending on the date on which the bank holding company proposes to commence an activity or acquisition, no administrative enforcement action has been commenced, and no cease and desist order has been issued pursuant to section 8 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, against the bank holding company or any depository institution subsidiary of the holding company, and no such enforcement action, order, or other administrative enforcement proceeding is pending as of such date.

(5) NOTIFICATION.—

(A) COMMENCEMENT OF ACTIVITIES APPROVED BY RULE.—A bank holding company that qualifies under paragraph (4) and that proposes to engage de novo, directly or through a subsidiary, in any activity that is permissible

under subsection (c)(8), as determined by the Board by regulation, may commence that activity without prior notice to the Board and must provide written notification to the Board not later than 10 business days after commencing the activity.

(B) ACTIVITIES PERMITTED BY ORDER AND ACQUISITIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—At least 12 business days before commencing any activity pursuant to paragraph (3) (other than an activity described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph) or acquiring shares or assets of any company pursuant to paragraph (3), the bank holding company shall provide written notice of the proposal to the Board, unless the Board determines that no notice or a shorter notice period is appropriate.

(ii) DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND TERMS.—A notification under this subparagraph shall include a description of the proposed activities and the terms of any proposed acquisition.

(6) RECENTLY ACQUIRED INSTITUTIONS.—Any insured depository institution which has been acquired by a bank holding company during the 12-month period preceding the date on which the company proposes to commence an activity or acquisition pursuant to paragraph (3) may be excluded for purposes of paragraph (4)(B)(ii) if—

(A) the bank holding company has developed a plan for the institution to restore the capital and management of the institution which is acceptable to the appropriate Federal banking agency; and

(B) all such insured depository institutions represent, in the aggregate, less than 10 percent of the aggregate total risk-weighted assets of all insured depository institutions controlled by the bank holding company.

(7) ADJUSTMENT OF PERCENTAGES.—The Board may, by regulation, adjust the percentages and the manner in which the percentages of insured depository institutions are calculated under paragraph (4)(B)(i), (4)(D), or (6)(B) if the Board determines that any such adjustment is consistent with safety and soundness and the purposes of this Act.

(k) ENGAGING IN ACTIVITIES THAT ARE FINANCIAL IN NATURE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), a financial holding company may engage in any activity, and may acquire and retain the shares of any company engaged in any activity, that the Board, in accordance with paragraph (2), determines (by regulation or order)—

(A) to be financial in nature or incidental to such financial activity; or

(B) is complementary to a financial activity and does not pose a substantial risk to the safety or soundness of depository institutions or the financial system generally.

(2) COORDINATION BETWEEN THE BOARD AND THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.—

(A) PROPOSALS RAISED BEFORE THE BOARD.—

(i) CONSULTATION.—The Board shall notify the Secretary of the Treasury of, and consult with the Sec-

retary of the Treasury concerning, any request, proposal, or application under this subsection for a determination of whether an activity is financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity.

(ii) TREASURY VIEW.—The Board shall not determine that any activity is financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity under this subsection if the Secretary of the Treasury notifies the Board in writing, not later than 30 days after the date of receipt of the notice described in clause (i) (or such longer period as the Board determines to be appropriate under the circumstances) that the Secretary of the Treasury believes that the activity is not financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity or is not otherwise permissible under this section.

(B) PROPOSALS RAISED BY THE TREASURY.—

(i) TREASURY RECOMMENDATION.—The Secretary of the Treasury may, at any time, recommend in writing that the Board find an activity to be financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity.

(ii) TIME PERIOD FOR BOARD ACTION.—Not later than 30 days after the date of receipt of a written recommendation from the Secretary of the Treasury under clause (i) (or such longer period as the Secretary of the Treasury and the Board determine to be appropriate under the circumstances), the Board shall determine whether to initiate a public rulemaking proposing that the recommended activity be found to be financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity under this subsection, and shall notify the Secretary of the Treasury in writing of the determination of the Board and, if the Board determines not to seek public comment on the proposal, the reasons for that determination.

(3) FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED.—In determining whether an activity is financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity, the Board shall take into account—

(A) the purposes of this Act and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act;

(B) changes or reasonably expected changes in the marketplace in which financial holding companies compete;

(C) changes or reasonably expected changes in the technology for delivering financial services; and

(D) whether such activity is necessary or appropriate to allow a financial holding company and the affiliates of a financial holding company to—

(i) compete effectively with any company seeking to provide financial services in the United States;

(ii) efficiently deliver information and services that are financial in nature through the use of technological means, including any application necessary to protect the security or efficacy of systems for the transmission of data or financial transactions; and

(iii) offer customers any available or emerging technological means for using financial services or for the document imaging of data.

(4) ACTIVITIES THAT ARE FINANCIAL IN NATURE.—For purposes of this subsection, the following activities shall be considered to be financial in nature:

(A) Lending, exchanging, transferring, investing for others, or safeguarding money or securities.

(B) Insuring, guaranteeing, or indemnifying against loss, harm, damage, illness, disability, or death, or providing and issuing annuities, and acting as principal, agent, or broker for purposes of the foregoing, in any State.

(C) Providing financial, investment, or economic advisory services, including advising an investment company (as defined in section 3 of the Investment Company Act of 1940).

(D) Issuing or selling instruments representing interests in pools of assets permissible for a bank to hold directly.

(E) Underwriting, dealing in, or making a market in securities.

(F) Engaging in any activity that the Board has determined, by order or regulation that is in effect on the date of the enactment of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, to be so closely related to banking or managing or controlling banks as to be a proper incident thereto (subject to the same terms and conditions contained in such order or regulation, unless modified by the Board).

(G) Engaging, in the United States, in any activity that—

(i) a bank holding company may engage in outside of the United States; and

(ii) the Board has determined, under regulations prescribed or interpretations issued pursuant to subsection (c)(13) (as in effect on the day before the date of the enactment of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act) to be usual in connection with the transaction of banking or other financial operations abroad.

(H) Directly or indirectly acquiring or controlling, whether as principal, on behalf of 1 or more entities (including entities, other than a depository institution or subsidiary of a depository institution, that the bank holding company controls), or otherwise, shares, assets, or ownership interests (including debt or equity securities, partnership interests, trust certificates, or other instruments representing ownership) of a company or other entity, whether or not constituting control of such company or entity, engaged in any activity not authorized pursuant to this section if—

(i) the shares, assets, or ownership interests are not acquired or held by a depository institution or subsidiary of a depository institution;

(ii) such shares, assets, or ownership interests are acquired and held by—

(I) a securities affiliate or an affiliate thereof; or

(II) an affiliate of an insurance company described in subparagraph (I)(ii) that provides investment advice to an insurance company and is

registered pursuant to the Investment Advisers Act of 1940, or an affiliate of such investment adviser;

as part of a bona fide underwriting or merchant or investment banking activity, including investment activities engaged in for the purpose of appreciation and ultimate resale or disposition of the investment;

(iii) such shares, assets, or ownership interests are held for a period of time to enable the sale or disposition thereof on a reasonable basis consistent with the financial viability of the activities described in clause (ii); and

(iv) during the period such shares, assets, or ownership interests are held, the bank holding company does not routinely manage or operate such company or entity except as may be necessary or required to obtain a reasonable return on investment upon resale or disposition.

(I) Directly or indirectly acquiring or controlling, whether as principal, on behalf of 1 or more entities (including entities, other than a depository institution or subsidiary of a depository institution, that the bank holding company controls) or otherwise, shares, assets, or ownership interests (including debt or equity securities, partnership interests, trust certificates or other instruments representing ownership) of a company or other entity, whether or not constituting control of such company or entity, engaged in any activity not authorized pursuant to this section if—

(i) the shares, assets, or ownership interests are not acquired or held by a depository institution or a subsidiary of a depository institution;

(ii) such shares, assets, or ownership interests are acquired and held by an insurance company that is predominantly engaged in underwriting life, accident and health, or property and casualty insurance (other than credit-related insurance) or providing and issuing annuities;

(iii) such shares, assets, or ownership interests represent an investment made in the ordinary course of business of such insurance company in accordance with relevant State law governing such investments; and

(iv) during the period such shares, assets, or ownership interests are held, the bank holding company does not routinely manage or operate such company except as may be necessary or required to obtain a reasonable return on investment.

(5) ACTIONS REQUIRED.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall, by regulation or order, define, consistent with the purposes of this Act, the activities described in subparagraph (B) as financial in nature, and the extent to which such activities are financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity.

(B) ACTIVITIES.—The activities described in this subparagraph are as follows:

(i) Lending, exchanging, transferring, investing for others, or safeguarding financial assets other than money or securities.

(ii) Providing any device or other instrumentality for transferring money or other financial assets.

(iii) Arranging, effecting, or facilitating financial transactions for the account of third parties.

(6) REQUIRED NOTIFICATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A financial holding company that acquires any company or commences any activity pursuant to this subsection shall provide written notice to the Board describing the activity commenced or conducted by the company acquired not later than 30 calendar days after commencing the activity or consummating the acquisition, as the case may be.

(B) APPROVAL NOT REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (j) with regard to the acquisition of a savings association and clause (ii), a financial holding company may commence any activity, or acquire any company, pursuant to paragraph (4) or any regulation prescribed or order issued under paragraph (5), without prior approval of the Board.

(ii) EXCEPTION.—A financial holding company may not acquire a company, without the prior approval of the Board, in a transaction in which the total consolidated assets to be acquired by the financial holding company exceed $10,000,000,000.

(iii) HART-SCOTT-RODINO FILING REQUIREMENT.—Solely for purposes of section 7A(c)(8) of the Clayton Act (15 U.S.C. 18a(c)(8)), the transactions subject to the requirements of this paragraph shall be treated as if the approval of the Board is not required.

(7) MERCHANT BANKING ACTIVITIES.—

(A) JOINT REGULATIONS.—The Board and the Secretary of the Treasury may issue such regulations implementing paragraph (4)(H), including limitations on transactions between depository institutions and companies controlled pursuant to such paragraph, as the Board and the Secretary jointly deem appropriate to assure compliance with the purposes and prevent evasions of this Act and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act and to protect depository institutions. *Under such regulations, the period of time generally permitted for holding merchant banking investments shall not be less than 15 years. For any merchant banking investment held on the date of enactment of the Merchant Banking Modernization Act, the holding period of time permitted shall not be less than 15 years from the initial date of the investment.*

(B) SUNSET OF RESTRICTIONS ON MERCHANT BANKING ACTIVITIES OF FINANCIAL SUBSIDIARIES.—The restrictions contained in paragraph (4)(H) on the ownership and control of shares, assets, or ownership interests by or on behalf of a subsidiary of a depository institution shall not apply to a

financial subsidiary (as defined in section 5136A of the Revised Statutes of the United States) of a bank, if the Board and the Secretary of the Treasury jointly authorize financial subsidiaries of banks to engage in merchant banking activities pursuant to section 122 of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act.

(l) CONDITIONS FOR ENGAGING IN EXPANDED FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (k), (n), or (o), a bank holding company may not engage in any activity, or directly or indirectly acquire or retain shares of any company engaged in any activity, under subsection (k), (n), or (o), other than activities permissible for any bank holding company under subsection (c)(8), unless—

(A) all of the depository institution subsidiaries of the bank holding company are well capitalized;

(B) all of the depository institution subsidiaries of the bank holding company are well managed;

(C) the bank holding company is well capitalized and well managed; and

(D) the bank holding company has filed with the Board—

(i) a declaration that the company elects to be a financial holding company to engage in activities or acquire and retain shares of a company that were not permissible for a bank holding company to engage in or acquire before the enactment of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act; and

(ii) a certification that the company meets the requirements of subparagraphs (A), (B), and (C).

(2) CRA REQUIREMENT.—Notwithstanding subsection (k) or (n) of this section, section 5136A(a) of the Revised Statutes of the United States, or section 46(a) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, the appropriate Federal banking agency shall prohibit a financial holding company or any insured depository institution from—

(A) commencing any new activity under subsection (k) or (n) of this section, section 5136A(a) of the Revised Statutes of the United States, or section 46(a) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act; or

(B) directly or indirectly acquiring control of a company engaged in any activity under subsection (k) or (n) of this section, section 5136A(a) of the Revised Statutes of the United States, or section 46(a) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act (other than an investment made pursuant to subparagraph (H) or (I) of subsection (k)(4), or section 122 of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, or under section 46(a) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act by reason of such section 122, by an affiliate already engaged in activities under any such provision);

if any insured depository institution subsidiary of such financial holding company, or the insured depository institution or any of its insured depository institution affiliates, has received in its most recent examination under the Community Reinvest-

ment Act of 1977, a rating of less than "satisfactory record of meeting community credit needs".

(3) FOREIGN BANKS.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the Board shall apply comparable capital and management standards to a foreign bank that operates a branch or agency or owns or controls a commercial lending company in the United States, giving due regard to the principle of national treatment and equality of competitive opportunity.

(m) PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO FINANCIAL HOLDING COMPANIES THAT FAIL TO MEET CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—If the Board finds that—

(A) a financial holding company is engaged, directly or indirectly, in any activity under subsection (k), (n), or (o), other than activities that are permissible for a bank holding company under subsection (c)(8); and

(B) such financial holding company is not in compliance with the requirements of subsection (l)(1);

the Board shall give notice to the financial holding company to that effect, describing the conditions giving rise to the notice.

(2) AGREEMENT TO CORRECT CONDITIONS REQUIRED.—Not later than 45 days after the date of receipt by a financial holding company of a notice given under paragraph (1) (or such additional period as the Board may permit), the financial holding company shall execute an agreement with the Board to comply with the requirements applicable to a financial holding company under subsection (l)(1).

(3) BOARD MAY IMPOSE LIMITATIONS.—Until the conditions described in a notice to a financial holding company under paragraph (1) are corrected, the Board may impose such limitations on the conduct or activities of that financial holding company or any affiliate of that company as the Board determines to be appropriate under the circumstances and consistent with the purposes of this Act.

(4) FAILURE TO CORRECT.—If the conditions described in a notice to a financial holding company under paragraph (1) are not corrected within 180 days after the date of receipt by the financial holding company of a notice under paragraph (1), the Board may require such financial holding company, under such terms and conditions as may be imposed by the Board and subject to such extension of time as may be granted in the discretion of the Board, either—

(A) to divest control of any subsidiary depository institution; or

(B) at the election of the financial holding company instead to cease to engage in any activity conducted by such financial holding company or its subsidiaries (other than a depository institution or a subsidiary of a depository institution) that is not an activity that is permissible for a bank holding company under subsection (c)(8).

(5) CONSULTATION.—In taking any action under this subsection, the Board shall consult with all relevant Federal and State regulatory agencies and authorities.

(n) AUTHORITY TO RETAIN LIMITED NONFINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AND AFFILIATIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), a company that is not a bank holding company or a foreign bank (as defined in section 1(b)(7) of the International Banking Act of 1978) and becomes a financial holding company after the date of the enactment of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act may continue to engage in any activity and retain direct or indirect ownership or control of shares of a company engaged in any activity if—

(A) the holding company lawfully was engaged in the activity or held the shares of such company on September 30, 1999;

(B) the holding company is predominantly engaged in financial activities as defined in paragraph (2); and

(C) the company engaged in such activity continues to engage only in the same activities that such company conducted on September 30, 1999, and other activities permissible under this Act.

(2) PREDOMINANTLY FINANCIAL.—For purposes of this subsection, a company is predominantly engaged in financial activities if the annual gross revenues derived by the holding company and all subsidiaries of the holding company (excluding revenues derived from subsidiary depository institutions), on a consolidated basis, from engaging in activities that are financial in nature or are incidental to a financial activity under subsection (k) represent at least 85 percent of the consolidated annual gross revenues of the company.

(3) NO EXPANSION OF GRANDFATHERED COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES THROUGH MERGER OR CONSOLIDATION.—A financial holding company that engages in activities or holds shares pursuant to this subsection, or a subsidiary of such financial holding company, may not acquire, in any merger, consolidation, or other type of business combination, assets of any other company that is engaged in any activity that the Board has not determined to be financial in nature or incidental to a financial activity under subsection (k), except this paragraph shall not apply with respect to a company that owns a broadcasting station licensed under title III of the Communications Act of 1934 and the shares of which are under common control with an insurance company since January 1, 1998, unless such company is acquired by, or otherwise becomes an affiliate of, a bank holding company that, at the time such acquisition or affiliation is consummated, is 1 of the 5 largest domestic bank holding companies (as determined on the basis of the consolidated total assets of such companies).

(4) CONTINUING REVENUE LIMITATION ON GRANDFATHERED COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this subsection, a financial holding company may continue to engage in activities or hold shares in companies pursuant to this subsection only to the extent that the aggregate annual gross revenues derived from all such activities and all such companies does not exceed 15 percent of the consolidated annual gross revenues of the financial holding company (excluding revenues derived from subsidiary depository institutions).

(5) CROSS MARKETING RESTRICTIONS APPLICABLE TO COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A depository institution controlled by a financial holding company shall not—

(i) offer or market, directly or through any arrangement, any product or service of a company whose activities are conducted or whose shares are owned or controlled by the financial holding company pursuant to this subsection or subparagraph (H) or (I) of subsection (k)(4); or

(ii) permit any of its products or services to be offered or marketed, directly or through any arrangement, by or through any company described in clause (i).

(B) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Subparagraph (A) shall not be construed as prohibiting an arrangement between a depository institution and a company owned or controlled pursuant to subparagraph (H) or (I) of subsection (k)(4) for the marketing of products or services through statement inserts or Internet websites if—

(i) such arrangement does not violate section 106 of the Bank Holding Company Act Amendments of 1970; and

(ii) the Board determines that the arrangement is in the public interest, does not undermine the separation of banking and commerce, and is consistent with the safety and soundness of depository institutions.

(6) TRANSACTIONS WITH NONFINANCIAL AFFILIATES.—A depository institution controlled by a financial holding company may not engage in a covered transaction (as defined in section 23A(b)(7) of the Federal Reserve Act) with any affiliate controlled by the company pursuant to this subsection.

(7) SUNSET OF GRANDFATHER.—A financial holding company engaged in any activity, or retaining direct or indirect ownership or control of shares of a company, pursuant to this subsection, shall terminate such activity and divest ownership or control of the shares of such company before the end of the 10-year period beginning on the date of the enactment of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act. The Board may, upon application by a financial holding company, extend such 10-year period by a period not to exceed an additional 5 years if such extension would not be detrimental to the public interest.

(o) REGULATION OF CERTAIN FINANCIAL HOLDING COMPANIES.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), a company that is not a bank holding company or a foreign bank (as defined in section 1(b)(7) of the International Banking Act of 1978) and becomes a financial holding company after the date of enactment of the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act, may continue to engage in, or directly or indirectly own or control shares of a company engaged in, activities related to the trading, sale, or investment in commodities and underlying physical properties that were not permissible for bank holding companies to conduct in the United States as of September 30, 1997, if—

(1) the holding company, or any subsidiary of the holding company, lawfully was engaged, directly or indirectly, in any of such activities as of September 30, 1997, in the United States;

(2) the attributed aggregate consolidated assets of the company held by the holding company pursuant to this subsection, and not otherwise permitted to be held by a financial holding company, are equal to not more than 5 percent of the total consolidated assets of the bank holding company, except that the Board may increase that percentage by such amounts and under such circumstances as the Board considers appropriate, consistent with the purposes of this Act; and

(3) the holding company does not permit—

(A) any company, the shares of which it owns or controls pursuant to this subsection, to offer or market any product or service of an affiliated depository institution; or

(B) any affiliated depository institution to offer or market any product or service of any company, the shares of which are owned or controlled by such holding company pursuant to this subsection.

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MINORITY VIEWS

H.R. 5291 would amend the Bank Holding Company Act (BHCA) to permit financial holding companies (FHCs), a type of bank holding company, to hold merchant banking investments for up to 15 years. The Fed's regulations currently set a limit of 10 years on these investments, though they may grant individual extensions based on the circumstance and could modify the regulation. Most of these investments are done by the largest banks and allow the bank to make engage in non-financial business activities that may incur unusual risks. In fact, the Federal Reserve has warned that, "The potential risks . . . [of] merchant banking activities exceed those of many more traditional banking activities."[1] It is unclear if any of banks may have bad merchant bank investments coming due that the Fed is reluctant to authorize an extension for that would be accomplished through this bill. Therefore, without more data about these kind of unique investments, such a reform could undermine the safety and soundness of the largest banks.

Bank Holding Companies (BHCs) engage in a broad range of activities that the Fed has deemed to be closely related to, or incidental to, the business of banking. BHCs may have both bank and nonbank subsidiaries. In addition, BHCs that elect to become financial holding companies can engage in any activity that has been deemed financial in nature, allowing banks, securities firms, and insurance firms to operate under common ownership and engage in a variety of other financial activities.

Merchant banking investments are an exception to BHCA's separation of banking and commerce.[2] They are permissible only for FHCs with subsidiaries that are broker-dealers, investment advisers, or affiliates underwriting insurance. In the course of underwriting, merchant banking, or investment banking, an FHC might obtain shares in a nonfinancial business.[3] Called merchant banking investments, these investments are allowed within certain limits on holding time and as a share of total capital.[4] Merchant banking investments cannot be made by the bank subsidiary and must be held separately by a portfolio company, such as a private equity fund, that is not routinely managed by the FHC.

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[1] Fed, Supervisory Guidance on Equity Investment and Merchant Banking Activities (Feb. 26, 2021).

[2] 12 U.S.C. § 1843(k)(7).

[3] A merchant bank provides financial services for corporations or high-net-worth individuals, as opposed to the general public, and is not housed in the bank subsidiary of an FHC. Investment banks underwrite securities for companies and governments and sell them to institutional investors. For example, an FHC might manage a company's initial public offering.

[4] 12 U.S.C. § 1843(n). The FHC cannot manage or operate the business and can hold the shares for up to 10–15 years, depending on the type, but can seek extensions. Merchant banking investments are limited to 20–30% of the FHC's Tier 1 capital, depending on the type. A bank cannot cross-market products from these companies and cannot engage in the types of transactions that are covered by affiliate restrictions.

The statutory authority for merchant banking investments is broad, and the implementing regulation defines it as "to acquire or control any amount of shares, assets or ownership interests of a company or other entity that is engaged in any activity not otherwise authorized for the financial holding company under section 4 of the Bank Holding Company Act."[5] According to one study: "In effect, the merchant banking power serves as a catch-all authority for FHCs to invest in commercial enterprises, as long as any such investment meets [the regulatory requirements] . . . . Even though an FHC is permitted to acquire full ownership of a purely commercial firm, the principal purpose of its investment must remain purely financial: making a profit upon subsequent resale or disposition of its ownership stake . . . . [T]he main justification for allowing FHCs to own or control commercial companies . . . is the notion of merchant banking as a fundamentally financial activity."[6]

Other activities that have been approved as complementary to finance for FHCs include trading physical commodities in spot and futures markets, energy management and tolling, and disease management and mail-order pharmacy activities. Existing FHCs' nonfinancial physical commodity market activities—including "extraction, transportation, storage, or distribution of commodities, or to process or refine commodities"—were grandfathered in.[7] When the Fed proposed a rule in 2016 to curb FHC activity in physical commodity markets (though did not finalize the rule), they noted FHCs held $29 billion in merchant banking investments, and 99% of merchant banking activity was undertaken by FHCs with over $50 billion in assets at the time.[8] Only Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley were grandfathered in to continue engaging in physical commodities activities. In addition, 12 FHCs, all with over $50 billion in assets, had been approved for complementary activities as of 2016.[9]

While some argue the reform put forward by this bill could help smaller banks support small businesses and affordable housing in their communities, the bill would apply to *any* merchant banking investment, regardless of type, as well as *all* banks, regardless of size, and the evidence we have available suggests these are largely handled by larger banks. Moreover, the Fed already has the authority to extend the investment period, either on a case-by-case basis or by updating the regulation. Without more data on these type of investments, it is difficult to know if a sweeping mandate to extend the maturity for all of these investments by 5 years would be beneficial or have any safety and soundness ramifications.

This bill is opposed by Americans for Financial Reform and Public Citizen.

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[5] 12 CFR § 225 Subpart J.
[6] Saule T. Omarova, The Merchants of Wall Street: Banking, Commerce, and Commodities (Nov. 2013).
[7] CRS, Bank Holding Companies: Background and Issues for Congress (Dec. 2024).
[8] Fed, Federal Reserve Board Invites Public Comment on Proposed Rule That Would Strengthen Existing Requirements and Limitations on the Physical Commodity Activities of Financial Holding Companies (Sep. 23, 2016).
[9] CRS, Bank Holding Companies: Background and Issues for Congress (Dec. 2024).

For these reasons, we oppose H.R. 5291.

Sincerely,

MAXINE WATERS,
Ranking Member.
NYDIA M. VELÁZQUEZ,
STEPHEN F. LYNCH,
AL GREEN,
JOYCE BEATTY,
RASHIDA TLAIB,
Members of Congress.

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